

Nº5

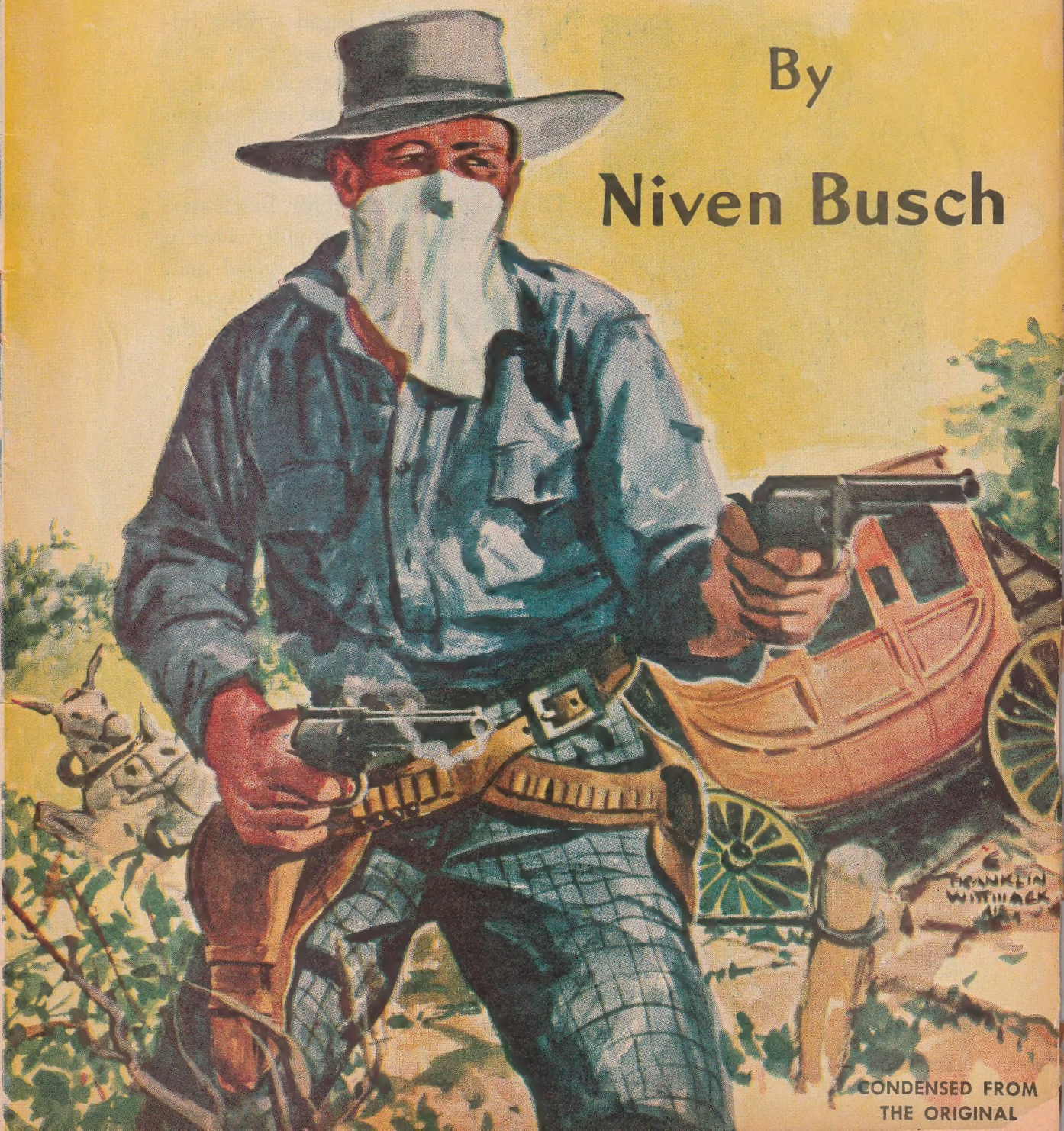
★ *American Library* ★

15¢

# Duel in the Sun

By

Niven Busch



CONDENSED FROM  
THE ORIGINAL



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**N**IVEN BUSCH began writing humorous skits and serious verse at an age when most youngsters are devoting their energies to marbles and hoop-rolling. When he was fifteen he was a regular contributor to McClure's magazine.

Of his higher education Mr. Busch says: "After two years at Princeton I yielded to the persuasion of Dean Gauss and quit. Gauss said I wasn't the Princeton type. I got even by refusing to subscribe to the Alumni Weekly."

Mr. Busch was born in New York City, in a house which later became a stable, then a speakeasy, and is now part of a storage warehouse—"the only fact," he says, "which has so far prevented me from purchasing the site and dedicating it as a shrine."

After his departure from Princeton sans honors Mr. Busch became a member of the editorial staff of Time magazine, which then was being edited by his cousin, Briton Hadden. He subsequently started contributing to The New Yorker and became a member of that magazine's staff also, serving as an associate editor of both publications simultaneously.

Turning his attention to Hollywood, he wrote or collaborated on some fifty feature motion pictures. Among these were "In Old Chicago," and "The Westerner." His first novel, "The Carrington Incident," further demonstrated his versatility. Praising this thriller, The Saturday Review of Literature described it as a shocker "with the insulation removed" and a "hard book to put down." It is even harder to put down "Duel in the Sun."

# DUEL in the SUN

By  
NIVEN BUSCH



An illustrated  
condensed version of  
the novel published by  
WM. MORROW & CO.

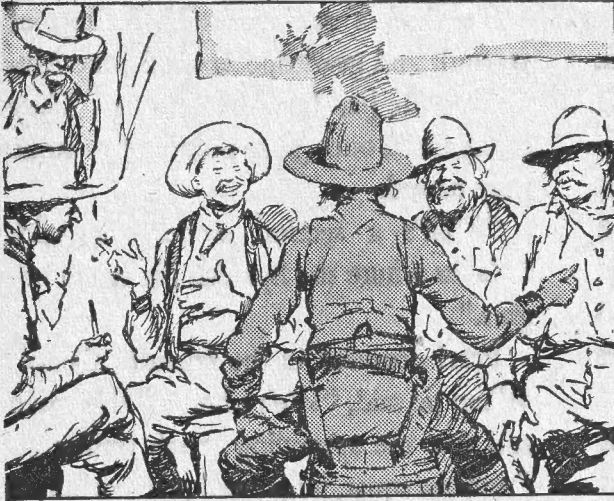
DAVID McKAY COMPANY, WASHINGTON SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA

Drawings copyright, 1944, by King Features Syndicate, Inc.  
Text copyright, 1944, by Niven Busch.





## DUEL IN THE SUN



Men were soaking in the sun . . .



Pearl's eyes had a happy glisten.

PEARL CHAVEZ was only twelve years old when she arrived in the Texas hamlet of Paradise Flats that spring day of '83. The men soaking in the sun in front of Doan and Curran's store swore later that they spotted Indian the first time they laid eyes on her.

It showed in her long legs and ropy bluish-black hair. Jesse McCanles, who was waiting for her, glanced expressionlessly at the skinny girl as she stepped from the Dodge-El Paso stage. She stood there curling her thin toes in the dust where the stage trail, for a few yards, became a street.

A kid without shoes! That story about a relative of the McCanles clan which

ruled the Staked Plains country would make telling. The eldest son of Senator McCanles took her bundle and motioned. They walked to the store.

"Fix her up," Jesse told Ned Doan.

He had been waiting for two hours with the Spanish Bit's best rig for this "cousin" from the south. Though she would call Senator McCanles, owner of the tremendous ranch, "uncle," actually Pearl was only a distant cousin of his wife's. Now, with her French father dead and her half-breed mother remarried, she was being "taken in."

Ned Doan slipped on her feet a pair of shining black boots. Pearl's eyes had a hard, happy glisten in them. Doan asked,



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"Want a pair of stockings?"

Jesse was looking over Pearl's head. "Might as well have some," he said. "And see what else you have."

Twenty minutes later, Pearl and Jesse again crossed the hot street. Now she wore a blouse with puffed sleeves and a riding skirt. Jesse picked up the reins and the big sorrel whirled Pearl Chavez, the poor relation, out of sight.

They rolled over the big tan plain that followed the heave of the continent. Pearl



She had a feeling of warmth toward Jesse.

clasped her bundle. She was glad she had it though it contained only a few cast-off things. It seemed proof that she came from somewhere, that she had an identity, however humble.

She had a strange wild feeling of warmth and gratitude toward Jesse McCanles. He had been kind to her. They spoke little; once Jesse pointed to a stone they passed.

"That's a section stone," he said. "Marks where the Spanish Bit ranch begins."

Pearl drowsed in the friendly silence. When he said, "We're home," she woke and saw the sprawling ranch buildings. From the squat, huge headquarters building, four people emerged to welcome the new arrival. . . .

When Pearl Chavez arrived at the Spanish Bit ranch in the rig, Senator Jackson T. McCanles led the strange committee of welcome. Her "uncle" was short and thickset with a mop of red hair tinged with gray. He extended a thick, dry, distrustful hand.

"Git down. . . . A pleasure! Come in!"

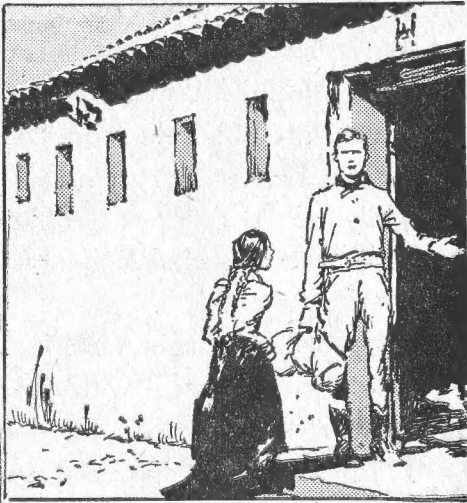
He added in a slightly sorrowful way: "I must apologize for Mrs. Senator McCanles. Her health has been drug down. She's ailing. But we'll meet her later."

Jesse, the eldest son at 20, had driven her out. Now the Senator introduced his other sons. "... Lewt, my second son and his brother Gilman, and young Ruck, the baby of the family." A kind of dry





## DUEL IN THE SUN



"It's kind of you to take me in," Pearl said.

Lewt motioned her through . . .

and savage excuse for a laugh went with the last. At eleven, Ruck was a stupid giant.

Gilman looked like his father. Lewt's face was mocking, vicious and extraordinarily handsome. He smiled.

"It's mighty kind of you to take me in, sir," Pearl said. It was what she had been told to say but she hated the words.

She now executed the maneuver which was supposed to go with them, a kind of skip made backward with one leg behind the other.

"Well, I'll be damned," the Senator said. "Seems like you been brought up right handy. Yes siree."

Taking out a cambric handkerchief,

the Senator wiped his hand. Pearl was still very dirty. "Glad to have you, child," he said. "There's a room ready for you inside. One of the boys will show you. . . ."

He turned away, his briskness gone—already locked in his grizzled shell, indifferent to the drama of her arrival.

"I'll tend to it, sir," Lewt said. He picked up her bundle and motioned her through the huge doorway. Many rooms opened from the hallway. She seemed to have walked a long time when he opened a door.

The place had a sour smell of having been shut up. It was dark as a closet, lighted only by a slit which was the Senator's idea of a window and had been a



## DUEL IN THE SUN



gunslot during the cattle wars.

Lewt struck a match and lit an oil-lamp which he pulled down from the ceiling on a chain. "This is the room you can use," he said. Pearl turned her head slowly and while she did so, Lewt took her by the shoulders, thin and wiry in his hands. He kissed her rapidly.

Pearl gasped and fought fiercely. . . .

Pearl's face squeezed with fury at Lewt's attempt to kiss her. He dodged when she kicked at him and smiled



He seized her and Pearl fought fiercely.

broadly.

"Take it easy," he said, "I was only funnin'."

"Don't you dare touch me," Pearl said. When he went out, she slammed the door

forcibly. A terrible homesickness came over her. She looked with brimming eyes at the brand-mark burned on the door panel as a kind of ornament—the Spanish Bit, an H with loops on the uprights and a spade-shaped design on the cross-bar. She thought. I'll never like it here.

But as the months went by, Pearl fitted more easily into life at the Spanish Bit. Jesse, who had met her at the train, seemed everything to her, the only really wonderful person she'd ever met. On a Saturday, when she thought Jesse would be coming out from his law practice in town, she'd saddle a horse and ride out to meet him.

If she met him, she'd get in the buggy with him, tying her horse behind on a lead rope. Then, she did most of the talking. That was odd because Pearl had no gift of words; with most people she was the silent one. Jesse, as a lawyer, knew thousands of words but with Pearl he didn't use them. He seemed to prefer listening.

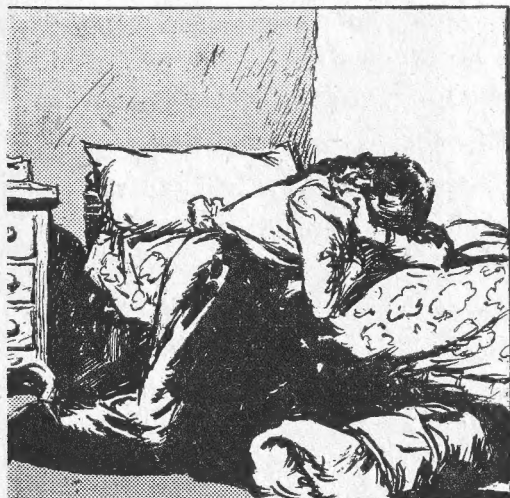
Sometimes Jesse made her drive. He'd have a bundle of papers with him—about the railroad project he was working on—and he'd read them as the buggy jogged along.

Still, at the last, and it was two whole

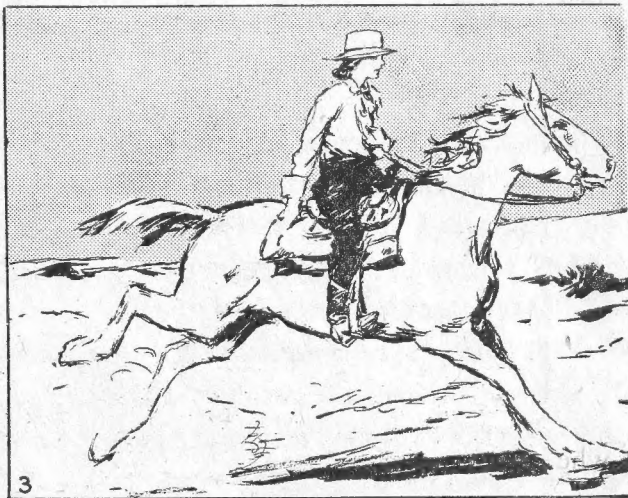




## DUEL IN THE SUN



A terrible homesickness came over her . . .



Later, she often rode out to meet Jesse.

summers later, it was Lewt who won Pearl's first voluntary kiss. Lewt had gone up to the Cherokee Strip on some business for his father and when he came back he was different.

He walked with a kind of swagger which he had copied from outlaws he had met and admired up in the Strip but he treated Pearl differently. He was attentive and this day he rode with her to the sump, a windmill pond which had been dammed and dredged out at one end. It was a cool place on the sweltering tan plain with a line of cottonwood trees. They sat under a big half-dead one called "Ward's Tree" because a rustler of that name had once swung from its lower

limb.

The handsome boy whose eyes still held that mocking light slipped an arm about the slim waist of the dark-haired girl. She who had fought him so viciously for so long now suddenly did not struggle. Pearl Chavez raised her lips for Lewt McCandles, the Senator's second son.

When Pearl withdrew from Lewt's embrace she smiled happily. "Couldn't we be bespoken?"

"I don't know, I guess so." Lewt's tone was noncommittal. Being bespoken was not something he had counted on. Pearl had Indian blood; his parents would never consent. She would never fit into the McCandles picture of empire.



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"You mean you don't want to?"

"Now don't get riled up, Pearl. Who's saying I don't?"

"You did." Suddenly, it seemed terribly important to her that Lewt acknowledge their love. He was afraid but he was wavering. Now he got up and went over to the big cottonwood tree. He took his knife and cut a heart.

"Watch," he said. He cut their initials and an arrow through the heart. Pearl watched, enthralled.



Pearl raised her lips for Lewt.

"That'll be here for a long time," Lewt said. "And it ain't no gravestone, neither."

In the weeks that followed, only one person noticed the change in Pearl's eyes when she gazed at Lewt. Laura Belle Mc-

Canles, mother of the Senator's four hulking sons, watched them intently. "It's no good," she said, as her son had known she would. "I'll have to set them right."

Of late, Laura Belle had spent more time in her own three rooms stuffed with lovely furniture brought by mule-team from the south. There was even a piano on which Laura Belle played when she wasn't taking brandy from her little gilt decanter.

Now Pearl was flattered by what seemed an increase in Mrs. McCanles' friendliness. Laura Belle instructed Pearl in "manners" and even sent to Chicago for five yards of lilac velvet for the girl's party dress. Now they made it.

"I'll tell you a secret—you'll be wearing this to a party before you think," she told her pupil with a smile, slipping it on. It was a beautiful dress, Pearl knew. It's deep color brought out flatteringly the dark tints of her smooth, rich skin. "Let's see you walk," Laura Belle said. "Remember, you must glide, child."

Pearl knew what it all meant. She told Lewt next time they met, "Your mother knows we're in love. Either we tell people now we're bespoken—or I get out!"

In Lewt's mind, decision flashed. Now was the time to break it off or he'd be tied





## DUEL IN THE SUN



Lewt cut a heart in the tree . . .



Mrs. McCanles said, "You must glide, child."

down forever. "You can go," he said. "No little breed can tell me—"

Pearl's lips curled. "Thanks," she said.

Over the vast domain of the Spanish Bit there appeared a new cloud now, as sinister and threatening in its way as the fierce tenseness between Pearl and Lewt. The railroad which Jesse represented as a lawyer was coming in but his son's interest in the F.W. & D.C. did not lessen the Senator's bitter opposition to this encroachment.

One morning Gil McCanles wakened Pearl. "Want to see a scrap?" he said. "The railroad's putting a work squad on our land at noon and Dad aims to stop them. We can make it if we hurry."

They rode the eighteen miles in less than two hours. They were in plenty of time. The end of steel was hidden from sight by a slight rise but the noise of the work engine was close. The weather had turned wet and colder.

Spanish Bit men held a position slightly back of the fence line. They seemed confident but restless. All carried arms—sixshooters, Ball saddle carbines, Springfield and big-bore, octagon-barreled Hawkes.

Pearl kept watching Lewt, hoping he would come over and speak to her. Since their quarrel they had hardly exchanged ten words. Yet in this moment so full of suspended danger Pearl couldn't take her



## DUEL IN THE SUN



They rode eighteen miles . . .



Spanish Bit men seemed confident but restless.

eyes off him; she thought the Senator looked small and insignificant beside his handsome son.

Jackson T. McCanles blinked into the smoky rain, chewing one end of his sandy mustache. He had on an ancient army poncho that covered him down to his boot-tops as he sat on the stallion Camarillo. His expression was grave and preoccupied whereas Lewt was in high spirits.

Lewt kept making jokes, turning his head from one to another of his listeners, smiling at them. Sometimes he would put his hand on a man's shoulder with a great show of friendship and yet with a patronizing air. He had on a buckskin jacket

which set off his narrow waist and broad shoulders.

Gil kept on talking excitedly about the railroad's probable strategy. "They say the Governor might declare martial law," he said. "Hell, Dad put in Governor Oddam. He's too scared of the Spanish Bit to try and do a thing like that to us."

The rain continued to fall. It was nearly noon. Then over the rise of ground that hid the railroad works came straggling a file of laborers, picks and shovels on their shoulders. The cowboys cocked their guns.

The railroad laborers straggled up to the drift of rusty wire which marked the Spanish Bit ranchlands. They stopped not

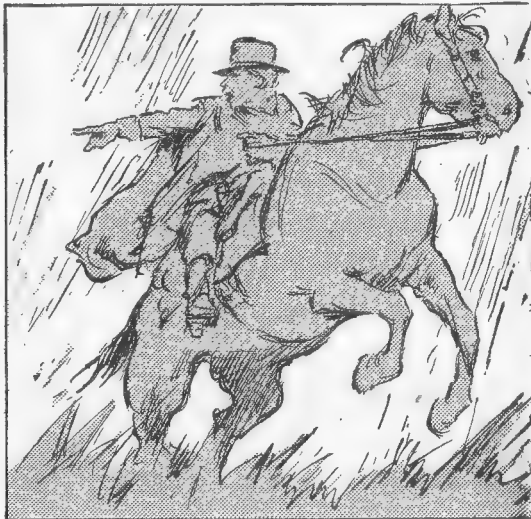




## DUEL IN THE SUN



Jesse unfolded a paper and began to read.



The Senator pulled Camarillo back . . .

far from the waiting armed men. The Senator watched them grimly.

And now behind the work-gang a new group appeared. There was Monroe Glidden, the construction engineer in work clothes and field boots; little paunchy C. V. Langford, president of the railroad, dressed in city fashion with an umbrella to protect his silk topper from the rain, and a third man.

Pearl didn't see at first who this third man was. But Gil, beside her, suddenly began to swear.

"Who is it? What's the matter?" Pearl's words burst out before she saw. Then she caught her breath.

The third man was Jesse McCanles.

The three advanced steadily. Mr. Langford looked at the armed men behind the fence line and made a slight bow.

"Good afternoon, Senator McCanles," he said.

"Kindly state your business, sir."

Mr. Langford said, "I believe you know our counsel — Mr. Jesse S. McCanles. He has a court order to serve on you, sir."

Jesse unfolded a blue paper. "I guess you know what this is, sir."

"I'm happy to say I don't."

Jesse began to read. The Senator said, "Save your breath son." To Langford, he shouted, "You have my permission, sir, to go to hell."



## DUEL IN THE SUN



Mr. Langford reached in an inside pocket, a dangerous move since he was covered at that moment by seventy-five assorted side and shoulder arms. But he wasn't reaching for a derringer. He took out a white handkerchief and held it up. Then he and Glidden went back, motioning Jesse to join them. He shook his head and stood there alone.

The workmen moved quietly from their position in front of the cowboys. The McCanles gunmen fidgeted. This



**"You're yellow!" Lewt said.**

would tell whether McCanles and the Spanish Bit would rule or power would go to the town and railroad.

They watched the Texas Rangers come over the rise and execute a right

front into line, each man drawing his carbine as he dismounted. "Ready, load—" The Senator pulled Camarillo back on his haunches.

Pearl's lips were moving. . . . "Don't let them fire, or God . . ." Jesse still stood between the opposed lines.

The McCanles gunmen and the Texas Rangers faced each other across the wire of the Spanish Bit with carbines at ready. Jesse still stood between the lines with the casual air of someone refereeing a sporting contest.

"Fire!" shouted Senator McCanles. He seemed to imagine himself back at Shiloh. But though rifles were levelled, no one pulled the trigger that would have started the slaughter. Rangers began to cut the wire with pliers and some hands wrestled briefly with them but they were beaten off with pistol butts.

Lewt's horse balked at the wire. He jumped off and ran up to his brother, Jesse. "You're yellow. Playing policeman! Mr. Lawyer with his silk-hat friends! How much did they pay you to sell us out?"

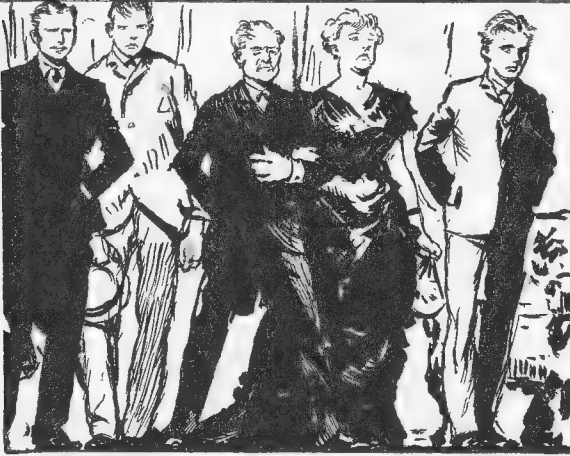
"I didn't sell you out, Lewt. I brought you a railroad."

Lewt's fist caught his brother solidly. Two Rangers caught his arms and a little





## DUEL IN THE SUN



The McCanles family attended the dance.



Pearl picked up her train and went out.

worm of blood ran down Jesse's chin.

The men with the pliers had cut the wire now, and they began to pull the fence posts up so that the work gang could come in.

In a few weeks, the railroad had advanced far beyond the Spanish Bit ranchlands. Senator McCanles, who had fought it so bitterly, accepted the fact. So when his old friend, Gabe Withington, owner of the Rafter T, gave a dance and barbecue to celebrate the road's coming, the McCanles family attended.

Pearl waited in the upstairs room of the Rafter T to finish hooking the lilac party dress. She could hear the band below and the sounds of the square dance. A fat girl

stood before the only mirror, brushing her hair. It seemed she would never finish.

Finally, Pearl tapped her arm and when the girl turned she stepped quickly in front of her. Pearl finished while the fat girl glared. She lifted a corner of the lilac dress enough to see the buckled slippers Mrs. McCanles had lent her. Then she picked up her train and hurried out.

The fat girl said to a girl from Drag Four. "She pushed me clear away from this-yere looking glass."

"She's trash," the other girl said. "She's part Indian, I heard for sure!"

But Pearl was going rapidly downstairs. She heard the dance call. She hesitated at the foot of the stairs, her assur-



## DUEL IN THE SUN



ance suddenly gone.

Pearl stood against the wall. The music had a hearty swing to it. The caller intoned:

*Birdie hop out and crane hop in—  
Three hands 'round, and go it agin'.*

She could see Jesse sitting in the gallery, talking to a tall, homely thin girl with glasses, beautifully dressed. Lewt was in the poker game in the other, closed room which Mrs. Withington entered from time to time to get men to fill the



Jesse was sitting with a thin, homely girl . . .

square dance.

Now Mrs. Withington entered with Mr. Langford. The railroad president had been drinking freely. He dropped her arm and came up to Pearl. He asked,

"May I have the pleasure?" Mrs. Withington hooked his elbow before Pearl could reply. She said:

"Horace, this young lady has the dance engaged."

"Why don't I ever have some luck?"

Mr. Langford said gloomily as he was led away. Everyone had seen what had happened. The snub left Pearl puzzled. Why had Mrs. McCanles, who knew about such matters, brought her to the party if she wasn't "folks"?

The dance wound up. Everybody stopped, breathless. The musicians' faces were streaming with sweat but there was no pause in their work. Whang! The clevis-player brought his pin down on the iron and they were off again; the caller beginning a new chant. The dancers, in two lines, advanced toward each other, retreated, split into fours, then into pairs.

*Come to your partner one and a half,  
Yaller hammer right and jay bird left.*

Pearl walked quickly from the room, through the hall and out onto the gallery. She walked up and down the gallery once, wondering whether she should change her clothes and get a horse and blanket and start back. The prospect of the long ride by herself seemed far less difficult than staying here.





## DUEL IN THE SUN



"May I have the pleasure?" Mr. Langford asked.



Pearl started,—"I didn't see you!"

She stood still on the gallery, thinking. She was facing the light which, mingled with the sounds of the dance, streamed from an open parlor window. It was cool on the gallery.

A movement of the night air pressed the party dress against her body; light from the window fell on her face. A man standing in the shadow with his back against the wall made a slight movement and Pearl started.

"Oh!" she said unnecessarily. "I didn't see you. . . ."

As Pearl spoke, the man who had been standing in the shadows of the gallery stepped forward. He was hardly taller than herself and his hair, where the light

touched it, was somewhat gray. His voice was neither shy nor forward, the voice of a man with confidence.

"Pierce is my name," he said. "Sam to my friends. I'm strawboss for Mr. Withington."

Pearl told her name and the music started again. Sam said, "I've been tryin' to get up nerve. Would you dance with me . . . ?"

Pearl laughed. She changed her mind about leaving. "I'd enjoy it real well." It wouldn't be bad to be snubbed by Mrs. Withington and then come back with a proper partner of her own.

"What kind of tune is that?" Sam asked.

"That's a new dance, the polka," Pearl



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"I'd enjoy it real well," Pearl said.



She held up her arms and said, "Just start turnin'."

said. She whirled in the parlor door to face him. As she held up her arms, she said softly and urgently, "Just start turnin', Mr. Pierce. I know how to do it . . ." And she, who had never publicly performed any dance, guided him.

They did very well. Later, other men came up and when Sam introduced them, Pearl danced with them. She was a success and she danced, too, with Mr. Langford.

Then the caller called for Ladies' Choice. All the ladies gathered at one end of the room and the men, carefully unconcerned or grinning, at the other. When the music started the ladies would choose the partners they wanted. Secrets were revealed in the sight of all.

The dance-caller was just lifting his foot when Lewt came into the parlor and stood leaning in the doorway. Pearl knew why he was there. He had come to claim her. In the doorway, he could pretend, if she came up, that he'd only come to watch — perhaps refuse and leave her stranded, but not before showing the world whose girl she was. He looked calm, unruffled.

From Lewt, her eyes moved to Sam Pierce, standing at one end of the line of men. On his face was the over-serious look he wore most of the time and which relaxed only when he smiled. He waited for some decision that would make or mar his life.

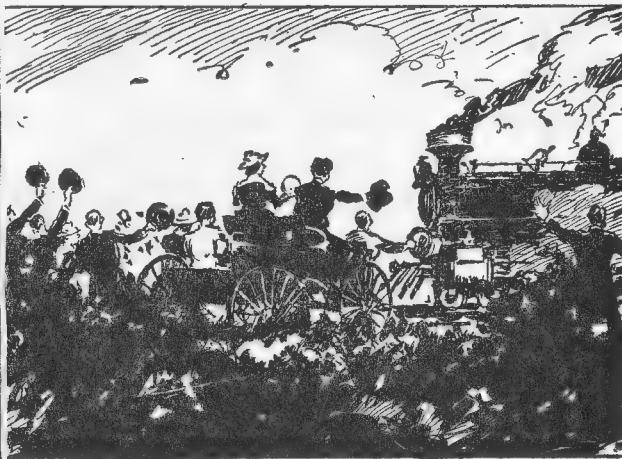




## DUEL IN THE SUN



The Senator peeled off a bill . . .



From the watchers rose a yell of welcome.

Sam had no wife, not even a girl. It was a solemn moment. Pearl felt this deeply. The women were exhilarated. The caller stomped, the fiddlers began and the ladies dashed across the open space.

As the ladies rushed to choose their partners for the dance, Pearl was far back in the jam. She didn't hurry; she was like a woman walking in her sleep.

Lewt's head turned once, his eyes filled with disbelief and then with killing hate as Pearl went up to Sam. Through the dance he never moved from his place in the doorway or looked at her again. He built a cigarette and stood smoking it but when she looked later, he had gone.

The guests went to bed at dawn, except

the poker players, and were up at ten for steak breakfasts. Lewt had given his I. O. U.'s in the game and the Senator peeled off a thousand dollar bill to make good.

Lewt went upstairs and shaved and came down slightly paler than usual but otherwise unchanged from his exertions. Without eating, he saddled his horse and won the chicken-pulling contest, leaning down at an impossible angle to snatch the neck of the rooster buried in loose dirt.

At four in the afternoon occurred the great event of the day, the most momentous single event which the Staked Plains had ever witnessed. All the guests were on hand for it, piling into buckboards,



## DUEL IN THE SUN



dearborns, buggies and hard-topped four-seaters. They drove down to the railroad tracks at a point where the F. W. & D. C. passed within two miles of the Rafter T.

The horses were unhitched and led back to a safe distance while the company sat in their conveyances and watched for the ceremonial train which would officially open the right of way.

Mr. and Mrs. Withington had brought a light spring-wagon half full of champagne; servants opened the bottles and

and began whistling ten miles away.

The whistling grew, shattering the ear drums. The sun bounced in globes from the brass trimmings of the 75-ton Titan with its mushroom-headed stack.

From the watchers rose a yell of admiration and welcome for the train with its six short yellow cars decorated in red, white and blue bunting.

Pearl sat and watched, her hands folded in her lap. It was like a dream. She was busy with thoughts more absorbing than any spectacle. Sam Pierce had respectfully asked permission to call on her.

Sam Pierce's courtship of Pearl was as deliberate as his speech and as conventional, grave and simple as the way he walked, rode, worked and talked to people. But he had plenty of get-up in his wooing. He needed it, riding seventy miles to see a girl.

He didn't even mind, for Pearl's sake, eating with the crazy damned McCandleses, a hostile group in which she had some half-decided status. They were polite to him but he told Pearl, "They figure me for a kind of rustler."

During Saturday evenings, Pearl and Sam sat stiffly on the gallery and tried to talk. It was difficult but they saved up little things to tell.



"You know I won't let you go," Lewt said.

passed the wine among the guests. Everyone was in a jovial mood. A famous engineer was driving the big locomotive from the Baldwin works; knowing what was expected, he throttled down to a crawl





## DUEL IN THE SUN



He hit her across the face, then.



Sam Pierce was driving to get his bride.

Lewt didn't take Sam seriously. He seemed to regard the engagement as a trick designed to make him jealous. But three days before the wedding, he at last went to Pearl's room. Pearl said, "I don't want for you to be here, Lewt."

But her voice shook. Lewt was sure of victory. She still loved him. "You know I won't let you go," he said.

Pearl's face was set. "You mean you just want me to be your girl again?"

Lewt shifted. He said grudgingly. "I'm not saying we can't get married sometime. Maybe next year..."

"I just want to get it straight."

Lewt stared at her. "I want you back, Pearl, honey," he said almost humbly.

"You lost your chance. I'm going. You're just Lewt McCanles with the pretty build and you don't have to work because your Dad has lots of money."

"That's right," Lewt said. He hit her across the face.

Pearl said, "Yes, you're a big, tough man. That proves it. Only if you meet Sam, don't tangle with him. He doesn't have to hit women to prove he's a killer."

Lewt's heels banged as he went out of the room.

On the morning of Dec. 24, 1887, Sam hitched a pair of horses to a brand new buckboard; the men he'd bossed at the Rafter T and Mr. and Mrs. Withington and their son and daughter gathered in



## DUEL IN THE SUN



the yard of the headquarters ranch to see him off.

Before Sam got away the buckboard was half full of gifts; nearly everybody had brought something, either bought or hand made, to help Sam start his new life with Pearl as his wife.

Today he was driving to the Spanish Bit to get his bride and take her to the home he had built for her.

On the way to claim his bride, Sam Pierce stopped in the Oriental. There was

It said, BARTENDER ON DUTY: PRETTY SAM STALEY. On one side was a row of small compartments. A customer on entering handed his side-arm to Pretty Sam who put it in a box and gave him a brass check.

At four o'clock that Friday afternoon, Sam Pierce's Bixby Model Colt went into one of these compartments. Pretty Sam noticed, as he often had before, that it was old and rusty. Pierce hadn't fired it in years. He only carried it because it was the custom.

The two Sams, long friends, greeted each other cordially. Pierce ordered a peppermint and soda, which was as near as he ever came to drinking. Then he addressed the room at large.

"I'd like to stand a drink for all," he said. Dropping the habitual reserve which sometimes made him seem shy and elderly he raised his voice and smiling around said firmly, "My treat, gentlemen! I'm getting married tomorrow."

"Save your money, Sam," Lewt said. Now he saw Lewt sitting with his chair against the wall. "Ain't you celebratin' a little previous?"

"Not the way I see it," Sam said. He watched Lewt closely. It seemed possible he was merely drunk.



"My treat," Sam said. "I'm getting married."

a rule there that you left your gun behind the bar. It wasn't strictly enforced but most customers complied.

A sign, printed in gilt letters, swung on staples in front of the spotless bar mirror.





## DUEL IN THE SUN



"Save your money, Sam," Lewt said.



The game stopped . . .

"You ain't married yet," Lewt said.

Sam turned and faced the mirror. It was evident that Lewt had waited to pick a quarrel and, if possible, kill him. Two courses were open: he could walk out unarmed, and try to fight later; or he could try to get his gun somehow and fight it out now.

Sam decided to fight now. He saw the reflection of huge Ben Lukens, the postmaster, in the mirror. "What about you, Ben?" he said. "Have a drink with me?"

To refuse under the circumstances could be a deadly insult. Ben's bulk quivered. A cowboy's poker game stopped and the room was deathly quiet. Ben's one good knee shook as he trundled toward

the bar—a perfect screen.

But Lewt was right behind. The bartender slid their drinks along the bar. Right after Sam's drink, he slid the Colt. Sam reached and Ben Lukens hit the floor.

When the bartender slid Sam Pierce's Colt down the bar, it came stock first so he could pick it up and fire with one right-handed motion. Ben Lukens already was hitting the floor when Sam leveled down on Lewt and pulled the trigger.

But Sam's gun was rusty and it jammed. Lewt shot him three times at a range of one yard. Sam grunted and backed up to the bar, then slowly folded up.

A murder warrant was sworn out for Lewt that night. Sheriff Hardy rode out



## DUEL IN THE SUN

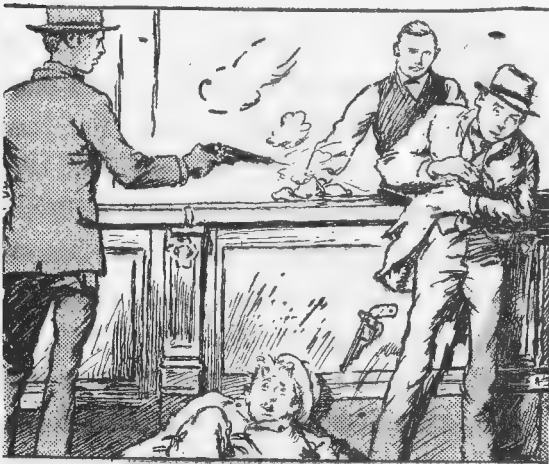


to the Spanish Bit to serve it but Lewt wasn't there. None of the family admitted having seen him.

Sam lay in state for two days. When Pearl viewed him, the ladies scrutinized her carefully. They professed later that she hadn't shown a trace of Christian feeling.

"She's a cold one," said the undertaker's wife.

"You don't believe she loved him?" her friend asked.



Lewt shot Sam three times . . .

"I believe she loved the other one. I think she still does. She'll be back with him, you wait and see."

By all known standards, the deduction seemed sensible. Most people were sure

Lewt had got back the girl he'd killed for. Facts that came to light in the months that followed Sam's death tended to substantiate this.

Lewt avoided the Staked Plains country. Outside it, small effort was made to bring him to justice. He got money from home in envelopes addressed to him by other names and spent it freely. He enjoyed the company of girls in Dodge, Abilene and San Antone. He was a regular at faro tables in the Queen High, El Paso.

He replenished his finances by meetings with his brothers or friends in isolated places in his father's vast range. And when he was seen, people noticed that Pearl was apt to be encountered in the same neighborhood before long.

Alone under the big sky, riding at a steady pace and wrapt in her own purposes, she would turn out to avoid other travelers. Few had any doubt she was the one who brought Lewt money. So strong was this belief that on two occasions, sheriff's deputies trailed her.

Though nothing came of either venture, they reported she had been following a faint trail.

Through the next two years, she continued her obscure journeying. A kind of



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"Pearl will be back with Lewt," she said.



Sheriff's deputies trailed Pearl, then.

legend grew around the lonely woman. Imagination followed her after she was swallowed in the endless stretch of the plains.

Lewt McCanles, as an exile, was not always satisfied with the money he received from home. His irritation reached a climax when Gil brought him two hundred dollars with the explanation that that was all the Senator could afford.

Lewt had a false, hard, nervous air about him. He put the money in his pocket. "Tell him I'll look out for myself from here on," he said. His weak-looking, handsome face assumed a rakish, secretive expression.

"Okay," Gil said. "So long." Gil

watched Lewt ride away from the stage station on a saddle studded with conchas as big as silver dollars. Gil spat. Lewt had always wanted a concha saddle—well, now he had it! Maybe he could raise some money on it!

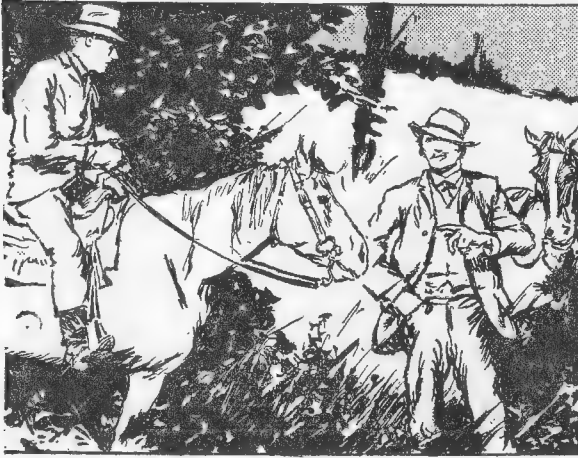
The thought was prophetic. A few days later, Lewt's fine saddle was in pawn in a Mobeetie gambling house called the Shores of Hell.

Lewt and Coz Crazy-Bear talked over the situation. Lewt had met Crazy-Bear—a man of various talents, all of them bad—in the Cherokee Strip. Coz was almost as broad as he was high and his reddish-brown face was heavily creased. It was the breed who outlined an attractive way

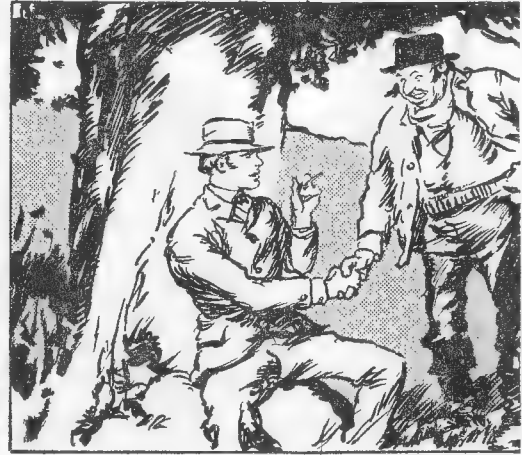




## DUEL IN THE SUN



"Tell him I'll look out for myself," Lewt said.



He and Coz shook hands on their decision.

for repossessing Lewt's saddle.

They discussed the matter for several hours and decided it was the only way. They shook hands on the decision, solemnly and rather drunkenly. They were partners. Lewt and Coz Crazy-Bear were partners all the way and back.

Both had considerable red-eye in their bellies when they reached the Shores of Hell next day to put the plan in operation. From inside came the sounds of a piano and a musty smell of last night's liquor.

The men's boots banged on the board sidewalks. George Otley, the proprietor, came toward the door, his big pink dew-lap shaking as he walked. He stood blink-

ing toward his visitors, shaping his mouth to receive the cigar he held in his right hand.

Suddenly terror squeezed his face. He turned to jump behind the bar but Coz stepped round him and the gambler, his hands raised, backed to the center of the room.

"You, too, perfessor," Coz told the piano player.

Lewt covered the latter while Coz stepped back in the office with Otley. He came back without George, carrying a cigar box. The saddle was behind the bar and Lewt grabbed it.

Thirty seconds after holding up the Shores of Hell gambling parlors, Lewt



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"You, too, perfessor," Coz said.



"I'll break some gamblers," Lewt said.

and Coz Crazy-Bear were in the street. Lewt had ridden a bare-back mount so that he'd have a place to put his saddle when he got it. He cinched up fast.

At the edge of town, they let the horses out. After a couple of miles, Coz looked back. "Clean as a bug's ear," he said with satisfaction.

Lewt was sick with nervous reaction that night. Then they rode for several days and Coz guided Lewt to a hideout he had used before—a deserted quicksilver mine.

When they opened the cigar box, Coz said, "It's a pleasure to do business with a man like that." There was \$1,600 in big bills and gold. "Always a square deal at

the Shores of Hell," Coz said. "Step right up gentlemen."

It was their first morning in the cabin in the little ghost town. Crazy-Bear had it well stocked. They split the money and Coz suggested they save part toward a Mexican ranch. "You do it," Lewt said disdainfully. "I'll take mine and break some chicken-feed gamblers."

In the week they lay around the cabin, Coz stayed drunk. But Lewt studied a stage schedule. Half without meaning to, he worked out the plan for their next move. Now he was boss when they finally stood beside the stage road. A clump of hackberry concealed their horses.

For the hundredth time, Lewt looked

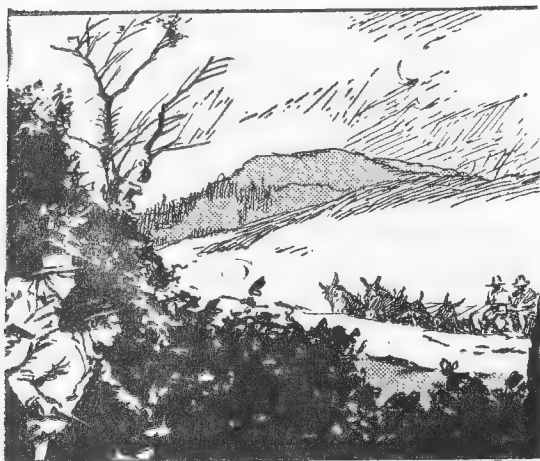


## DUEL IN THE SUN



at the rise beyond the wash, the place where the stage would come in sight. This time he saw it. He took a handkerchief out of his pocket. Tying two corners together, he pulled it over his head and settled it low on his nose. His legs felt a million miles away. Ice-cold needles jabbed his brain.

The stage was down in the wash now. Slowly it rose in sight again. The hats turned into seated men—the driver and a shotgun guard. The two rode unsup-



They hid beside the road . . .

ported through the twilight air until the body of the coach rose up, supporting them from underneath; then finally the six-mule team appeared, straining in their traces.

The high, yellow wheels of the stage topped the lip of the wash; the lead mules were stretching out, the wheelers buckled hard in their traces. The shotgun guard was dozing, a pipe sticking out of his mouth.

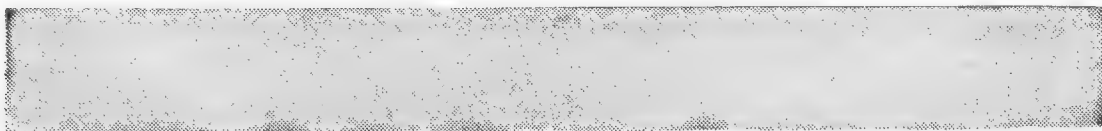
The stage lurched as the lead mules checked, seeing the cable that Lewt and Coz had stretched across the road between firm posts. In a second, they must strike the barrier.

While Lewt and Coz waited, guns ready, the mules hit the cable. They crashed down, the wheelers piled up on the leaders and the stage piled on them.

Lewt and Coz were running up beside the stage. The passengers, driver and guard climbed down slowly, their hands raised. Like the old-time stories of the Dalton boys, Lewt lined them all up, standing with two guns.

Coz relieved the mail-guard of his sawed-off shotgun. He searched the passengers. A big red-faced woman wearing a hat with peacock plumes put down one arm as if to ward him off. Coz hit her wrist with his gun and she screeched.

"No offense," Coz said politely. He took her brooch. Without a word, the woman fainted. Her grubby-looking little male companion moved toward her







## DUEL IN THE SUN



Lewt, with a gun in each hand, lined them up . . .



"No offense," Coz said politely.

and Lewt swung the shotgun over. At this moment, the mail-guard pulled a der-ringer. He fired first but missed.

The guard squared his broad shoulders. He looked with fearless eyes, waiting to be killed. Crazy-Bear picked up the shotgun and shot him in the chest.

"When you're being treated decent," he said, "learn to act decent."

Back at the hideout, Lewt and Coz counted up \$1,800. Lewt began his next plan, the biggest and boldest job they'd ever tried. The only trouble with it was they'd have to take a woman in on it.

Thus it was that a few weeks later a boy on a lathered horse got out to round-up camp and gave Gil McCanles a mes-

sage. Gil and Ruck rode immediately to the Spanish Bit and filed into the Senator's office.

"Pearl around?" Gil asked. The Senator said he hadn't seen her in several weeks. "She was in it, then?" Gil said.

"Speak up, Gil," the Senator said.

"The El Paso southbound train was held up," Gil said. "A woman set the signal and the engineer, Tim Harmony, stopped because it was a woman. They killed him and robbed the passengers and mail car. The sheriff sent out a posse and might come this way to have a look."

The Senator's eyes were hard. "It's a damn pack of lies," he said. "Lewt never had a thing to do with it."



## DUEL IN THE SUN



Gil and Ruck nodded in agreement. It was the edict they had come to hear. That night, friendly neighbors dropped in and they all waited. Then they heard the cottony drumming of hooves.

It was nearly midnight when Sheriff Hardy arrived at the Spanish Bit. He handed the Senator a warrant for Lewt's arrest, then searched the ranch for an hour. He found nothing.

But the posse which started out at dawn had better luck. The riders had no trouble

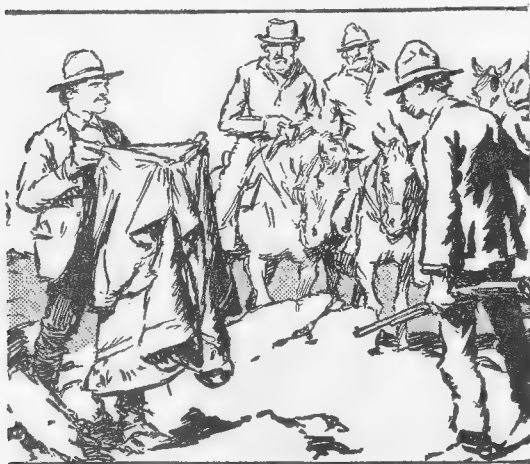
an interesting discovery; in a wash half hidden under a pile of stones they found a lady's skirt and hat, obviously those worn by the female who had acted as accessory.

Laury Matson, one of the sheriff's deputies, happened to remember the old quicksilver mine where Lewt and Coz had made a hideout. The posse had lost the trail—it had been hard to follow the print of unshod horses across volcanic rock formations but Matson recalled three peaks which marked the abandoned mine.

The men staked out their horses and went on afoot. They captured Lewt fast asleep in a cabin.

Coz Crazy-Bear wasn't with him. The Indian had quarreled with Lewt and ambled off to drink a jug of red-eye. He came staggering and singing down the ghost town street in the broad moonlight. Matson and another man threw down on him with Winchesters and told him to surrender but Coz went for his guns. So many bullets hit him he didn't look human.

The posse felt so good about the job they'd done that they decided to lay over until the next day and rest up. So they were still at the mine next afternoon and



The posse found a skirt and hat . . .

picking up the trail of Coz and Lewt at the spot of the railroad right of way where the El Paso southbound had been waylaid.

Quite early in their ride the posse made



## DUEL IN THE SUN



They captured Lewt fast asleep in a cabin.



"Grab your ears," he said.

had Lewt tied to a tree while Pearl was following the trail.

Pearl's grey gelding was shaking and she led the horse, carrying her rifle. When she saw the three peaks, she tied the horse out of the sun and went on alone. She worked past the peak and looked down at the ruined mine.

For fifty yards, her approach was screened by a slab of sandstone; she crawled past this, and slid over an ancient mass of excavation and stood up.

At that second she heard a sound, only a tiny sound but terrible, the end of everything—the unmistakable click of a rifle's cocking mechanism. A man's voice told her to put her gun down.

"Grab hold of your ears and turn around."

The posse brought Lewt and Pearl back to Paradise Flats that Sunday morning and put them in the squat adobe jail. Jesse McCanles knew he was throwing away his career with the railroad when he decided to defend his brother but he didn't hesitate.

Only Gil and Ruck who were waiting in his office didn't understand. They listened to his dry lawyer's words, then Gil said, "We aimed to git Lewt out tonight . . ."

Jesse's voice rose. "I told you what I'd do. If you try to break him out they'll get him back. Perhaps kill him doin' it."





## DUEL IN THE SUN



Gil and Ruck looked at each other, got up and went out. To them, Jesse wasn't a McCanles any more. They had blown the horn, rallied the clan and Jesse hadn't answered.

Jesse went out a little later. A crowd in front of the jail was growing. A low murmur ran through the pack and occasionally a hail of stones would beat against the jail's adobe wall.

Jesse turned in at the Oriental bar. Pretty Sam Staley, the bartender, filled



"They'll get him back," Jesse said.

the jigger carefully, not quite to the top. "It's pretty quiet," Sam said.

"So I've noticed."

Jesse drank and at that moment Helen Langford Reynolds came in. Miss Reyn-

olds was the niece of the railroad president and she was the thin, prim girl Pearl had noticed with Jesse at the Withington's dance.

Only now Miss Reynolds' hat was tilted over one eye and she was disturbed. She came right up to Jesse.

"Mr. McCanles," she said, her lips trembling, "what are you going to do about those poor people in that jail . . . a lynch mob . . . there must be some way . . ."

Jesse hesitated. "They won't do anything."

Miss Reynolds' eyes blazed. "How can you say that? Just listen to them." There was a sound of glass breaking.

Jesse turned. "Pardon me, I was about to go back to my rooms and get some rest." The woman seemed to shrivel up as he walked out.

Helen Reynolds turned to Pretty Sam. She laid a silver dollar on the bar. "I think I should like some whiskey," she said. She held the glass with both hands and drank. Sam guessed correctly that it was her first.

Helen Reynolds walked out and Sam began to lock up.

When the bartender started out into the crowd about the jail where Lewt and Pearl were held, he heard a woman screaming. He pushed his way through



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"Listen to them," she said, as glass broke . . .



Miss Reynolds seemed to shrivel up.

and saw that Helen Reynolds was arguing with Sharon Harmony, widow of the engineer who had been killed in the holdup.

Mrs. Harmony had been drinking. She berated the crowd for its indifference. "Men, just let me in there," she screamed. "I'll know how to deal with her that killed my Tim. Here's my rope," and she held up her huge hands.

Helen Reynolds cried, "Be still. You don't know what you're saying . . ."

The animosity of the crowd could be felt,—the change from a street gathering to a Thing, a mob longing to heave muscles, to tear down and smash. Men heard the women fight with arrested, savage vacancy. The quarrel was good; it

might start things moving; get some real action going.

Sheriff Hardy and armed deputies stood at the front entrance to the jail, facing the crowd. A clod of hard earth came sailing and barely missed the sheriff's head. The noise of the crowd drowned out the sound of three men who rode up the alley to the jail's back door.

The lock on the back door gave way with a squeal of wood and metal as it was crowbarred. Old Roger Foley, the jailer, yelled and fell moaning to the floor. Keys rattled and Lewt came out of his cell. Lewt, emaciated and ill-looking, opened Pearl's cell.

"Come on, Pearl," he said.



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"I know how to deal with her," she cried.



The lock on the door gave way . . .

He had her by the hand. She drew away from him and crouched, half cowering in a corner of the cell.

"I'm not going with you."

The others were behind him now, Gil and Ruck and the old man; their faces blurred in her brain. One of them said, "What's the matter with her?" And Lewt answered, "She don't want to come." He stood in the middle of the cell looking at her incredulously. He didn't know what to do next. "Don't be a damned fool, Pearl. They're liable to string you up."

"Go on," Pearl said. "Leave me be. I am not going with you."

"Come on, son," the old man said. Lewt whirled, leaving Pearl in her cell.

Footsteps made a clattering sound, all rushing out together. From outside came the crash of four horses running up the alley.

A few minutes after Lewt and his deliverers had pounded away, Pretty Sam Staley came puffing into Jesse's office. Jesse had never seen Sam out of breath before.

"Lewt's gone. They left Pearl," Sam gasped. "Your old man and your brothers busted up the alley and got him out."

"Who do you think you're funnin'?"

"It's the truth. They just took Lewt."

That night, Jesse thought about Pearl. He thought again the next day when his father sent an envelope containing money





## DUEL IN THE SUN



"Lewt's gone!" Pretty Sam gasped.



Pearl hunched in the corner of her cot.

on which he had written "*For the defense of Pearl Chavez.*" Jesse decided he wanted no part of it.

He doubted whether Pearl had a tenable, legal position. And she certainly had started Lewt on the way he had taken. Thus he reasoned. But it didn't prevent him taking his hat from the peg finally and walking over to the jail.

He went to the splintered back door and Boots Jasper let him in. He handed Jesse the tallow dip he was carrying in the dark place and when Jesse put it down on the pine table in the cell, huge shadows loomed up.

At the first glance, the cell looked empty. Pearl was hunched away over in

the corner of her cot.

"Lo, Pearl," Jesse said.

"Lo, Jesse." That was the way she'd always greeted him when she climbed into the buggy for a chat. Pearl was shaking but when he suggested medicine she said, "I don't need it."

"Didn't Lewt want to take you with him?" Jesse asked. It seemed the most important thing he'd come to ask.

"He tried Jesse. But I'd only have been holding him back, I was that weak I'd never stay on a horse."

Jesse looked at her, at her cracked and worn boots and he thought of the first pair he'd bought for her. "What you need most," he said, "is a lawyer."



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"I don't want to live," Pearl said.

"Thanks, Jesse," Pearl said, "but I don't need anybody. I don't want a lawyer . . . Everything about me is dogged down and put away."

Jesse got up. "Then I won't bother you, Pearl," he said. "I'll bid you good-night."

"Good night, Jesse. It was mighty thoughtful of you to come here to see me."

"The hell with that," Jesse burst out. "Do you want to put a rope around your own neck?" Pearl made no answer. He turned his back on her to go. He thought, Let her go to hell in her own way . . .

Though he had made up his mind there was no use bothering with Pearl, Jesse



She had trailed Lewt to kill him . . .

woke up next day thinking of her worn-out boots; a couple of days later he took her a new pair. Pearl said, "I got no use for boots. I'm not goin' anywhere."

They had put a decent oil lamp in Pearl's cell now. She put the boot on the pine table and then she bowed her head on her forearms. "If I talk to you," she said, "you'd try to make me want to live, and I don't want to live. I want to die!"

"That's not true."

"I'll tell you this much," she said, facing him. "If you make me talk, you'll be sorry. I'll promise you that."

In his experience with prisoners, Jesse had become adept at taking notes. He scribbled without making it noticeable



## DUEL IN THE SUN



She had to get the horses.



Jesse stood beside Pearl at the bench.

but when Pearl began talking she never even looked at the pencil and he jotted openly.

"I'm his girl, Lewt's I mean," Pearl said. "If I live, I'll go back to him."

Haltingly, she told then how she had trailed Lewt to kill him after Sam Pierce died. But when she found him, he had laughed at her and talked to her until she knew she couldn't do it. He had taken her in his arms and she had stayed with him.

"Did he make you help hold up the train?"

"He and that Indian, Coz, they got an old dress for me," Pearl said, "and an old hat. They said the Southbound wouldn't never stop for a man."

"Did you help in the robbery?"

Pearl didn't understand. "I just told you. They got the dress for me. It would have wrapped around me three times and the hat was a mile too big."

Jesse made a note. "What I'm asking is, were you there when the passengers were held up and Lewt broke into the mail car?"

Pearl shook her head. "I went back after the horses."

"Did anybody see you by the signal, see you close that is? Were you there when the train stopped?"

"I didn't wait that long. I had to hurry after the horses."

Both were silent. Pearl kept running



## DUEL IN THE SUN



one finger down a groove in the pine table. "You can't get lawyerin' out of the stuff I told you," she said. She clenched her fist in a desperate gesture as she spoke. "I told you, Jesse, you better let me be..."

Though Pearl seemed to regard her case as hopeless, Jesse pressed his fight to save her from the hangman's noose. He saw her every day. She still affected unconcern over her fate but this was no longer as convincing as it had been.

Jesse stood beside Pearl at her first ap-



"Pearl," Jesse said, "will you take the stand?"

pearance before the judge and said for her, "Not guilty." But back in the cell, Pearl asked him, "How can you say that?"

"I lied for you—if it was a lie," Jesse said slowly. "I entered the plea, Pearl. But

it might not have been a lie. I'm not dead sure in my own mind."

"You mean there's things in my favor?"

"There are," Jesse said more confidently. "You didn't shoot that engineer, did you, Pearl? You didn't lie to me about that, did you?"

"Now you know I didn't, Jesse. You just know for sure I never killed that man."

"And you didn't stop the train of your own accord?"

"Well, no, Jesse. All I did was—"

"We don't need to talk about what you did, not right now. What I want you to think about is that the robbery wasn't your notion. You're innocent."

Jesse didn't remember that a short time earlier he had considered her not worth defending. It was awful for him now to conceive of his plan failing, of her paying the penalty. One night he dreamt he saw her going up the thirteen steps to the gallows.

Every step made a dull thud which corresponded with the violent pounding of his own heart. On the gallows trap she stood impossibly remote, smiling with her radiant look of health and of unquenchable life beside the hangman.

No, she was worth saving. She'd been





## DUEL IN THE SUN



Johnny looked in a window . . .



Witnesses identified the old calico dress.

possessed! She'd been driven! You might never make a jury see that, but it was true. He'd get her off and then she could do whatever she liked, go back to Lewt or anyplace.

Paradise Flats had been celebrating for a week when the trial was ready to start. The hitchracks were lined with horses, the bars were full and every room was rented. If a man wanted to flop on a pool table in the Fashion it cost him a dollar; on the floor was fifty cents.

Every night, pretty near, someone got dragged into the hoose-gow for shooting at the lights on Allen Street. The gambling tables were packed. Side bets were five to four that Pearl would hang . . .

When Pearl's trial opened, hardly anybody could get into the courthouse which held less than a hundred people. Such benches as were ordinarily available for spectators were filled with Federal witnesses, all of them passengers on the train when it was held up.

A running account, however, was furnished by little Johnny-Behind-The-Trey. Johnny, who got his nickname by winning a big pot betting on that card, stood on the shoulders of Clovis Long, a powerfully built wheelwright, and looked in a second-story window.

Pearl, wearing her black taffeta dress, sat beside Jesse at a table inside the rail with her eyes modestly lowered. Johnny



## DUEL IN THE SUN



couldn't see much of her shape but he saw enough to make sure that she was innocent.

Prosecutor Lindsay moved fast. The jury was quickly selected — four cowhands, two nesters, a mule skinner, the telegraph agent, a trainer of quarter-horses, a dice-box man, the clerk for Doan & Curran's and a sick-looking man.

His witnesses told how for years Pearl was always seen in any place soon after Lewt McCanles had passed there. They



"Lewt? I wanted to kill him!" Pearl cried . . .

identified the old calico dress and the floppy hat which had been worn by the woman who stopped the train and which later had been found by the posse.

Then posse members told how she had

been captured near the old mine hideout. It didn't sound good—not good at all.

Jesse looked very tall and dignified in his long black coat, tan pants and yellow star-boots when he began his defense. His voice was sonorous and mild but full of quiet power as he strode before the jury box.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he began solemnly. "You have been called here to sit in judgment on a woman not yet twenty years old . . . a girl just beginning that life which you have the power to end . . ."

His mild voice droned on while the jurors listened. Where, he demanded, was Lewt McCanles, the man who really should have been on trial? His voice rang when he pointed out that only an old dress had been recognized, no one had identified Pearl!

"Public indignation has been aroused," Jesse said. "The law demands a victim. But there is one witness who can tell you how Pearl felt about my brother, whether she robbed and rode with him. "Pearl," he said, "will you please take the stand? . . ."

On the witness stand, Pearl told her whole story, describing her arrival in Paradise Flats "without boots on my feet." She told about her love for Lewt and her conviction that because of her In-



## DUEL IN THE SUN



Judge Sisk whacked his gavel.



The hat flopped across Pearl's face.

dian blood he would never marry her and she must look elsewhere for a husband.

She told too about being bespoken to Sam Pierce and how their preparations for a home together were cut short by his death.

"Did you know where Lewt was after Sam was killed?" Jesse asked her.

"No, but I never stopped trying to find him. I was always looking for him."

"You had been very much in love with Lewt once. Were your feelings toward him still the same?"

Pearl's cheeks sucked in. "No sir."

"Then you weren't looking for him so you could be with him, Pearl? Now, this is important. I want you to remember ex-

actly how you felt."

"*I wanted to kill him!*" Pearl brought out the words as though they scalded her mouth. "That's why I went to places where he'd been. If he'd done it to Sam he'd do it to any other man I went with. I had to do it."

Jesse's voice was calm. "Did you ever go back to him?" They had come to that part which was downright lying. Neither betrayed the slightest nervous flinching.

"No, sir. I never!"

Jesse went up to the exhibit table. He picked up the big calico dress and the dirty hat. To Pearl, he said, "Would you mind trying these on?"

Judge Buckshot Sisk whacked the gavel



## DUEL IN THE SUN



to stop the rustling and whispering in the courtroom. Pearl asked, "Right here?" and somebody laughed.

"Just slip it over your other dress."

Pearl looked frightened to death. The whole defense hung on this trick they had rehearsed. At the sight of the clothes, all the feelings she'd had as the train rushed down came back. She felt sick and dizzy but she pulled the dress over her head and put the hat on. She faced the jury.

She stood there with the preposterous



Bets were four to five Pearl would hang.

folds of the dress rolling onto the floor while the hat, now deliberately pulled down to its full depth instead of being perked up as she'd worn it that other night, flopped right down across her face.

The jury stared and the foreman let out a wild whoop of laughter. Was it at the failure of the trick itself? . . .

Pearl, dressed in the floppy old clothes, was genuinely bewildered. She turned around with a dismayed expression which made her look even funnier.

Jesse told the jury then that no woman had worn the clothes. Either Lewt or Coz or an unknown third party had masqueraded as a woman long enough to stop the train.

"What's more, gentlemen," he said, "if the posse hadn't found Lewt first, Pearl'd have killed him deader than a Christmas turkey."

The jury only went out because it was getting near supper time and they figured they might as well eat once more at the county's expense. They came back to say Pearl was not guilty.

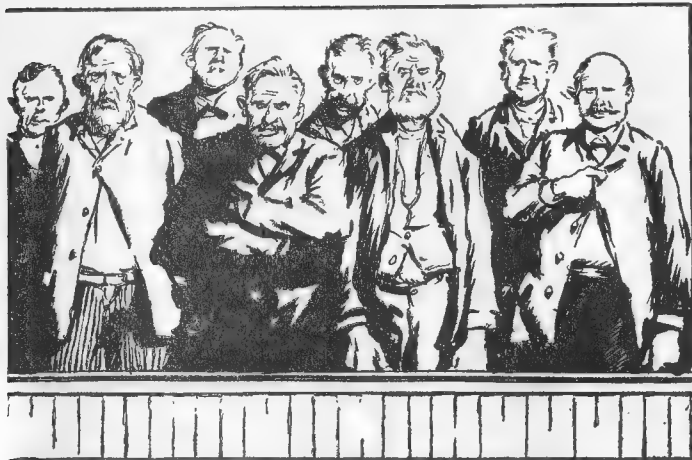
That afternoon, Jesse took Pearl to Mrs. Tatum's boarding house where he'd rented the front room for her. He stopped at the doorway and put out his hand in what he'd meant to be a friendly gesture. But it wasn't just that. The pounding in his head was like ten thousand hammers.

He knew now why he'd defended Pearl. And she who had felt so grateful to him since that first day when he had met





## DUEL IN THE SUN



The jury came back to say that Pearl was not guilty . . .

She moved into Jesse's arms.

her at the stagecoach, moved into his arms.

Three days after her acquittal, Jesse asked Pearl to marry him. The bans were published in the *Halo*.

But in the days that followed, Pearl was nervous. If she went into the postoffice, she would see the sign—

**WANTED FOR MURDER AND ROBBERY, LEWTON McCANLES**

Sometimes at night, the words recurred in her dreams. Even by day, she was jumpy and several times fancied she saw Lewt on the street. The fears seemed so senseless she was ashamed to tell Jesse but she was never at peace.

If she could only get away from here

with Jesse! She thought of the lands of the Cherokee Strip which were being opened up by the government. And this day as they sat in her room she at last told Jesse of her dread.

He listened and then he said, "I don't like this town any better than you do. If you'll come with me we'll go to the Strip. We'll make the Run. We'll go out there and make a home."

Pearl was trying not to weep. "Jesse, if you only knew. It's what I want, all I want—"

Jesse put his arms around her. His boney face was filled with pride and happiness. "We're leaving Lewt behind," he said. "We'll make a home . . ."



## DUEL IN THE SUN



Happily, Pearl and Jesse outfitted for their journey into the Cherokee Lands where they would start a new life and she could forget Lewt. Immigrants were getting ready for the Run in Paradise Flats and old cowmen watched the sod-busters with cynical amusement.

The drivers of the cattle-trail settled against the warm planks of the Oriental and rolled cigarettes. Smoke wreathed over the careful mockery in their eyes as they took in the show.



The sign was everywhere.

Jesse didn't share the common feeling about the immigrants. Of course he'd never be a sod-buster—he'd be a lawyer. But America had been built by squatter people with a hankering for the horizon.

They scratched for a living and when they took a look at what they'd scratched up it often turned out to be a new state.

Up and down Allen Street, Jesse and Pearl outfitted and became friendly with the immigrants who would be their clients. Jesse would stroll along with Pearl on his arm and sweep off his hat as he greeted them.

"Mornin', Mr. Motley. That's a mighty active-lookin' burro you've got there..." (This with a glance at some dog-eared piece of donkey flesh, drooping in the shafts of a farm wagon.)

"Oh, he'll git us by, counsellor."

Pearl did not go with Jesse on the day that he was arranging to have a light mule wagon repaired. When he got back to Mrs. Tatum's boarding-house at supper time, Pearl was out. It wasn't unusual for her to get a horse and ride out on the plain so Jesse stopped by the O. K. Corral.

"Did Pearl come in?" he asked.

"She rode away with a bed-roll this morning," the stable hand said. "An Indian came with a message for her..." He winced as Jesse seized his arm. "She took a gun an' a little pack stuff..."

Like a man in a daze, Jesse stumbled back to Pearl's room. The door was open. On the dresser was a note—"He knows we



## DUEL IN THE SUN



Jesse would stroll with Pearl and sweep off his hat as he greeted the immigrants.

are goin' to get married and he sent for me. If I don't go, he'll come for me. I know what I have to do, Jesse, so let me go. Don't ever try to catch me. Thank you, my dearest, for your kindness to me. Gratefully, Pearl Chavez."

Jesse looked at it until the words were engraved forever on his mind, then he touched a match to the note. Before I let her go with Lewt, he thought, I'd kill both of them . . .

Pearl had a good horse for her journey to where Lewt had called her. The deep-chested sorrel made eighty miles from light to dark. Once or twice on a swell of ground she caught sight of a spot moving behind, far back on her trail—the Indian

messenger was tailing her. Behind the Indian, rode Jesse determined to intercept Pearl.

She made camp that night without lighting a fire, hobbled the horse and fell asleep with her head on her arm.

Jesse, farthest back of the three riders, saw a speck ahead and thought it was Pearl. I'll kill 'em both, he thought again. Actually, it was the Indian he saw and both he and the Indian passed that night within a quarter-mile of where Pearl lay sleeping.

In the gray light of dawn, while Jesse was searching for a lost trail, the Indian reached the stage station where Lewt was hiding. "Two come," he said. Brokenly,



## DUEL IN THE SUN



he told of the girl who was followed by the man. Lewt knew it was Jesse.

Lewt saddled his horse. "I'm going up to Five Oak camp," he said. "If the girl comes alone, tell her."

Pearl got the message a few hours later. Doggedly, she went on, working slowly higher. Growth was scarce; lizards and chuckwallars moved out of her way, raising tiny arrows of dust. It was dry, bad country; Pearl went ahead cautiously.

Among the thickets, the trail was faint

close behind Lewt.

Little wires of lightning jerked her pulse. She thought, I must make him show himself some way. Then I can do it. If he talks to me or looks at me I don't know. I couldn't do it looking in his eyes.

This is the time. NOW.

She filled the carbine's magazine. She moved her horse around so she could take a steady rest, firing across his back. She fired two quick shots, then two more. Almost at once something stirred in the slope opposite.

A man emerged on the bare patch of ground, his hat pulled over his eyes. He looked carefully at the side of the slope, then raised a six-shooter and fired two answering shots.

Pearl re-loaded the magazine. She drew a bead on Lewt and squeezed off jerkily, her heart pounding so hard it shook her whole body . . .

When Pearl fired at Lewt, she knew she had missed even before she saw the dust jump in the brush behind him. She fired again, as wildly as before. Oh God, she thought, now he knows that I've come killing.

Now the clearing opposite was empty. Pearl waited, cool at last, deadly and watchful. She swung off her horse and



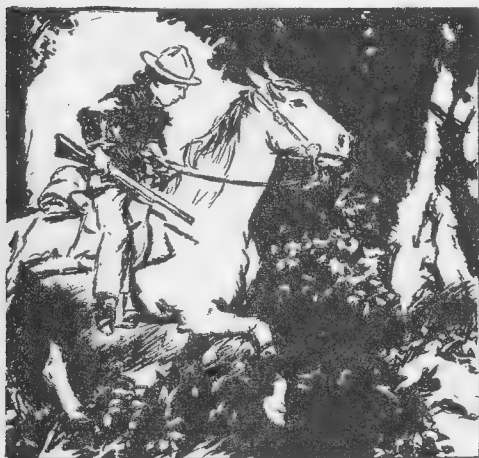
"Two come," the Indian told Lewt . . .

despite the directions she had been given. Determination filled her. She pumped a shell into the chamber of her gun and let the hammer down to half-cock. It was dusk when she could tell that she was





## DUEL IN THE SUN



Pearl worked higher; the trail was faint.



Her heart pounded; it shook her whole body.

tried to lead him back to safety. It was too late. The horse screamed and sank earthward even before she heard the rifle crash four hundred yards away.

Pearl rolled in the brush. The hillside crashed and two twigs broke above her. She had a steady elbow rest now and she fired at the last flash. Echoes jumped like boulders in an avalanche. Both slopes were still again.

Light drained from the air. An awful bitterness and hopelessness overwhelmed her. She had lost. Like everything else in her life, this long hunting had ended in defeat.

She didn't care much now. Her horse was dead. She'd never get out of this brush

alive. It was better to stand up. He might miss and she could get him first.

Pearl rose and walked slowly up the slope, holding the rifle in front of her. She made no effort to walk softly or to hide in any way.

No shots came. Lewt was sitting with his back against a granite out-cropping. He had his eyes closed and was breathing rapidly; a wide area of blood soaked the shirt over his left shoulder. He opened his eyes and for a second there was terror in them; then a mocking, false charm and impish scorn lit up his face.

"I knew it was you," he said. "That was the luckiest shot you ever shot. Have you got a drink of water?"



## DUEL IN THE SUN



Pearl opened her mouth to say she hadn't. If I speak I'm lost. One word, just one, and I'll be playing his game. I'll be back with him again. I'll be a goner. With that hammering in her throat, she looked at him.

Time slid its panels back without a click. Lewt and Pearl were back at the time of Sam Pierce, the Spanish Bit, and their love for each other—hatred, distrust, desperation and lost youth, vanished hope and agony and bliss so sharp and sweet it was impossible to tell one from another.

They were there for an agonized instant as Pearl pulled the trigger. Lewt's body leaped toward her. It settled back, the eyes wide open, terrible, accusing.

Sobbing, she fell on her knees, watching life fade out of his open eyes . . .

It was next morning when Jesse came upon the sleeping Pearl and the body of Lewt which she had covered with a blanket. Signs told him the whole tragic story; but what mattered was that he, Jesse, had his girl back, indeed, he understood now he'd never lost her.

Early that afternoon Jesse and Pearl started back. After blindfolding Jesse's horse and tying up one foreleg, they got Lewt's body across it.

The funeral was one of the biggest

Paradise Flats had ever seen. The undertaker's big black truck-horses stepped slowly, heavily. Black nets covered them, silvered with dust. The hearse with its high black wheels had glass sides through which was visible the varnished casket.

Jesse walked with Gil and Ruck. Senator and Mrs. McCanles rode. Practically the whole population watched and some even hummed the song which already had been written—

Once in the saddle I used to go dashing  
Once in the saddle I used to go gay  
Trusted my luck to a woman who  
killed me,  
Got shot in the chest and I'm dying to-  
day.

Sinkiller Crabbe's obituary sermon was less melancholy but more factual. "Brethren and sistern," he said, "we're buryin' a poor misguided devil here today. He was a reckless buckaroo and met the end the Lord above reserves for such—a chunk of lead that let the daylight in. Now we'll put him in the ground."

The Rev. Crabbe was less eloquent when, a week later, he pronounced the wedding ceremony for Pearl Chavez and Jesse McCanles. They were married in the All-Denominational Church at five o'clock on the morning of April 14, 1889,



## DUEL IN THE SUN



Pearl's horse sank earthward . . .



She fired at the flash.

an hour chosen because at seven o'clock the Cherokee Lands were to be opened by Government proclamation.

Jesse and Pearl had finished their plans for making the Run but had put off the wedding till the day itself because Pearl had insisted she wouldn't spend her wedding night in Paradise Flats.

Jesse was going by wagon. Pearl, for greater speed, was on the train. She would get off at their rendezvous—a townsite near the border—and file a claim.

The train was packed with homesteaders. When the cavalry trooper fired the opening gun, cheers went up from the spectators. The wheels spun and smoke poured from the stack . . .

On the way into Oklahoma land, Pearl was wedged into a corner, half-sitting on her principle article of baggage, a bundle of bedding and clothes tied with rope. She wore a money-belt under her dress and felt sure a mean-looking man had noticed it. She held her hand to show the wedding ring.

The train went slowly, stopping often as passengers leaped off, falling over one another in their eagerness to file claims.

"Kimbrough," the conductor yelled at last, as though it was a real town and not just a dot on the map. Pearl climbed down to the rolling plain. She saw a woman trying to hush a screaming baby and offered the woman a canteen of milk.



## DUEL IN THE SUN



"Thank you," the woman said. "Young 'uns eat everything the first five minutes." Pearl felt renewed confidence; the woman did not know her—it would really be like starting life over.

Late that day, she staked out a home-site. She stood in line two hours to file it at the land office which stayed open until midnight. Nobody in town seemed to want to sleep that night. Three Kansas City operators had put up a dance-hall equipped with a plank floor, girls, a bar and tables for dice, chuck-a-luck, and faro.

One of the customers, a renegade named Crescent Sam Shuman, got obstreperous and was shot by the marshal; a plank buffet was cleared off and the dead man placed upon it, his face covered with a napkin and his arms reverently folded on his chest. He lay there ignored by

everyone, while the dealers called the games and the music plinked and the dancers' feet scraped on the floor with a sound like sandpaper.

Pearl waited patiently. For fifty cents, she had lured a boy with a wheelbarrow to move her carryall from the railroad so everything was gathered at the spot she had claimed for them.

The sounds of human existence coming to the prairie filled the night air. Music from the dance hall mingled with the quarreling of a couple putting up a lean-to a few yards away. Frequently, a burst of shots rang out, fired into the air by some celebrant who was letting off steam.

At last Jesse found her, coming up with the wagon. She put her arms around his neck and then they emptied the wagon on the new ground — the ground that now was theirs.

THE END



# What Do You Know?

## 50 BIG QUIZ CONTESTS!

—100 Questions in EACH Quiz—

Special Sets of Brain-Twisters on  
All These Fascinating Subjects:

Abbreviations	Law
Animals	Lovers
Arts	Mathematics
Bible	Music
Books	Mythology
Characters	Painting
Colors	Presidents
Countries	Pronunciation
Dates	Quotations
Etiquette	Reading
Filing	Religion
Famous People	Science
Food	Sculpture
Foreign Terms	Shakespeare
France	Songs
General	Spelling
Grammar	Sports
History	Stage
Ireland	Words
Italy	Writers

More Fun Than A  
Barrel of Monkeys  
for YOU and  
YOUR FRIENDS!

**5,000**  
INTERESTING QUESTIONS!  
5,000 CORRECT ANSWERS

HERE'S the biggest, best book of Quiz Questions you've ever seen! There's no other book quite like it. Imagine!—five thousand separate questions, and answers, to help you see how much you really know—find out which of your friends are really the smartest!

Questions on every conceivable subject, too. Arranged in FIFTY giant quizzes—each one of which has been tried on a famous celebrity of stage,

screen, radio, sports, newspaperdom. THEIR scores are given in this book. See how you "stack up" against them!

"WHAT DO YOU KNOW?" by Sabina Hart Connolly, is more than a barrel of fun. It's a brain tonic and a world of information. A special index enables you to mix your own brain-teasers, too.

Start enjoying this fascinating entertainment NOW. Get this big book for yourself for only a dollar postpaid.



Send your order  
to:

**DAVID McKAY  
COMPANY**

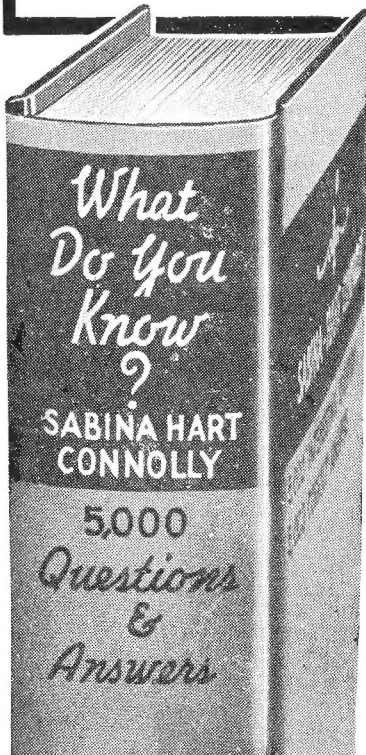
DEPT. 216  
604 S. WASHINGTON  
SQUARE  
PHILADELPHIA 6  
PA.

Please write clearly.  
Use handy coupon  
below if you wish.

### Match Wits With Movie and Radio Stars!

Lowell Thomas  
Bob Ripley  
Grace Moore  
Eddie Cantor  
Damon Runyon  
Deanna Durbin  
Eddy Duchin  
Frank Buck  
Kate Smith  
Professor Quiz  
Dr. Logan Clendening  
Ely Culbertson  
Eddie Rickenbacker  
George McManus  
Tyrone Power  
Don Ameche  
"Bugs" Baer  
—and many others.

See How YOUR Scores  
Compare With THEIRS!



**Only  
\$1.00**

**454 PAGES  
CLOTH BOUND  
FULL LIBRARY  
SIZE**

DAVID McKAY CO., Dept. 216  
Washington Square, Philadelphia 6, Pa.  
Send me WHAT DO YOU KNOW? post-  
paid. I'm sending you \$1.00 together with  
this coupon carefully filled out.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

# 94 MORE catchy cartoons with glamorous gals and howling humor!



only

\$1

HERE'S your chance to enjoy MORE morale-building, eye-filling cartoons and rib-tickling laughs—in this NEW, better-than-ever collection of girls and gags—**MORE CUTIES IN ARMS**—by E. Simms Campbell, of *Esquire* fame. 94 MORE cartoons of luscious, lovable lassies and hilarious humor that began with that other howler, *Cuties In Arms*.

Enjoy this mirth-maker yourself, then send it along to your buddy in the service. Mail it to any camp or Army and Navy post office in the U. S. for only 3c. It will make a knockout of a gift! Send the coupon with only \$1.00 for your copy. Money back if not delighted! David McKay Company, Dept. 148, 604 South Washington Square, Philadelphia 6, Pa.

## MAIL COUPON NOW!

DAVID MCKAY COMPANY, Dept. 148,  
604 S. Washington Square, Philadelphia 6, Pa.

Send me, postpaid, a copy of **MORE CUTIES IN ARMS**. I enclose one dollar. You'll give me my money back if I don't think the cartoons are swell.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_

